The San Francisco Museum of Art presents

ART IN CINEMA

Seventh Year—Ninth Series

The ART IN CINEMA showings were established to present a more vigorous and liberated attitude towards the film medium. Now, in its seventh year, and with an international reputation, this stimulating experience in film-going has broadened its original objective, and deepened it as well.

Friday, October 2 1953

Art in Cinema is honored to present the distinguished director GEORGE STEVENS in an informal talk, with sections from three of his most outstanding films: "I Remember Mama" (RKO), "A Place in the Sun," and "Shane" (Paramount).

The Way of the Experimental Film

MASQUERAGE by Max de Haas (Netherlands, 1951). A vivid interpretation of primitive expression that has won acclaim and awards. (Cannes, Venice, Edinburgh Festivals, 1952, and first prize Robert J. Flaherty Award.)
PALLE ALONE IN THE WORLD by Astrid Henning-Jensen (Danish, 1952). Premier showing in the United States of this remarkable rendition of the famous Danish children's story about the dream world of a small boy.
BELLS OF ATLANTIS by Ian Hugo (U.S., 1952). Western premiere. The imaginary realism of Hugo's photography, abstractions by LEN LYE, poetry written, spoken, & acted by ANAIS NIN, electronic music by LOUISE & BEEBE BARRON. (Venice Film Festival, 1952.)
GO SLOW ON THE BRIGHTON LINE, a recent BBC television film, in which the London to Brighton Express train makes the 51 mile trip in 4 minutes.

Masters of Mood: Duvivier Friday, October 9

POIL DE CAROTTE by Julien Duvivier (French, 1932). It led the caravan of the French revival, and it was Harry Baur's first outstanding film performance.

The Poetry of Attack

A PROPOS DE NICE by Jean Vigo (French, 1928). The first film by the brilliant but short lived white-hope of the French cinema.
PLAGUE SUMMER by Charles Kessler (U. S., 1952). From KENNETH PATCHEN's "Journal of Albion Moonlight." Both Kessler and Patchen will be present to speak briefly about the film.
SONG OF THE PRAIRIE by Jiri Trnka (Czeck, 1950). A relentless, satirical wit in the form of marionettes, by this master.

Three Women Behind Cameras Friday, October 16

OLYMPIAD by Leni Riefenstahl (German, 1936-38). The much-praised spectacle, shot by an army of cameramen under her direction, of the poetry of the human body at the Berlin Olympics.
OBNARU by Pat Marks (U. S., 1953). Premiere showing of an accomplished abstract work, accompanied by LIVE sound, to consist of a combo including Gerald Wilson, Teddy Edwards, and other well-known musicians.
WAITING by Flora Mock (U. S., 1952). Produced as a thesis for UCLA's Theatre Arts Department.

The Avant-Garde in France Today Friday, October 23

PREVIEW of an astounding use of the film medium . . .
TRAITE DE BAVE ET D'ETERNITE (VENON AND ETERNITY). Produced by Marc-Gilbert Guillaumin; directed by Jean-Isidore Isou (France, 1952). Sponsored by Jean Cocteau. With Cocteau, Jean-Louis Barrault, Blaise Cendrars, Danielle Delorme, Marcel Achard, Daniel Gelin, Andre Maurois, Edouard Dhermite, Armand Salacrou. At once a history, a revolt, an example in the form of love story, and a cinematic manifesto of the "Lettrist" poets. *Speaker* ALAN W. WATTS.

From Object to Non-Object Friday, October 30

LES CHARMES DE L'EXISTENCE (CHARM OF LIFE) by Jean Gremillon and Pierre Kast (France, 1950). Some Prix de Rome winners of the 1890s, and the "objects" of their meditation. (Venice and Edinburgh Film Festivals, 1951).
ADVENTURES OF PRINCE ACHMED produced by Cominius and made by Lotte Reiniger (German, 1926). Constant transformation of realistic design into abstraction.
ANALOGIES NO. 1 by James E. Davis (U. S., 1953). Further development of Mr. Davis' scintillating color and light, with analogies in nature.
ON THE EDGE by Curtis Harrington (U. S., 1949). A short but astonishing essay in pure cinematic poerty. (Cannes and Venice Film Festivals, 1952).
BLACKTOP AND PARADE by Charles Eames (U. S., 1952). The well-known designer turns to the film and produces these two outstanding experiments.
HYPERBOLIC PARABOLOID by Wheaton Galentine (U.S., 1951). Geometry in movement.

An Experiment and an Experience in 3-D

HY HIRSH and his three-dimensional, non-representational film.
"No one is more willing, eager, and, to tell the truth, able to take advantage of Hollywood's new devices than the experimenters of the cinematographic avant-garde . . . Hirsh's 3-D abstract film has added a new resource to non-objective art." ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN in the *S. F. Chronicle.*

These programs arranged and annotated by Frank Stauffacher

COMMITTEE

Dr. Grace L. McCann Morley, Director, San Francisco Museum of Art
Margareta Akermark, Museum of Modern Art Film Library
Lewis Jacobs, author "Rise of the American Film"
Rosalind Kossoff, Director, A. F. Films, Inc.
and with special acknowledgment to Robert Greensfelder, Director of Kinesis and Robert Katz, film authority and teacher.

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Please send me_____series tickets at $5.00 each (series) including tax ($4.00 for Museum Members) for the series of 5 nights of ART IN CINEMA film series, October 2 through October 30, at 8:00 P.M. Friday evenings.

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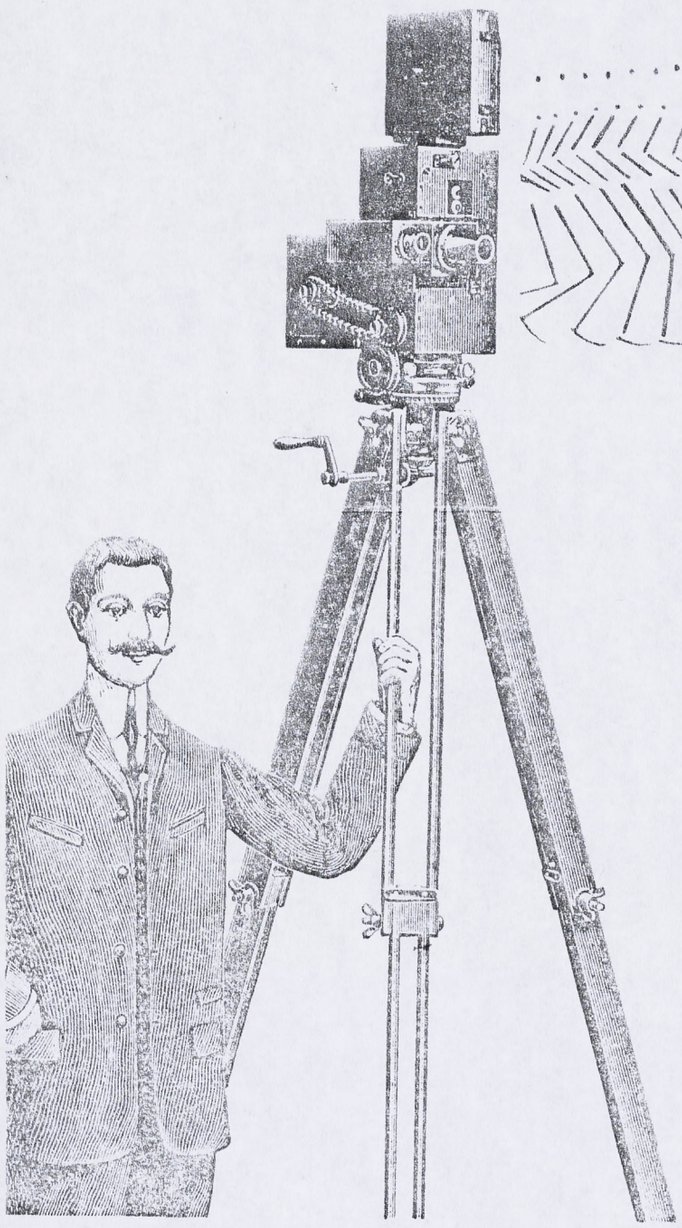

The era of purely ocular spectacles is at hand.
— Theophile Gautier

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THE NINTH SERIES OF THE OUTSTANDING "ART IN CINEMA" PROGRAMS DURING OCTOBER

On five Fridays, October 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30 at 8:00 p.m., the San Francisco Museum of Art will present the ninth of its internationally famous "Art In Cinema" series. During the seven years of its existence "Art In Cinema" has grown to become an acknowledged asset to the reputation of San Francisco's cultural life through its exciting and articulate presentations of all aspects of the film, including a high regard for the experimental approach. Nowhere else in this country is there such a showwindow for new explorers as well as old masters of the screen - commercial or non-commercial.

The Ninth Series will easily cover the broadest ground yet encompassed. A few of its high-points will be:

An address by the distinguished director, one of the boldest within the industry, George Stevens, who will show and discuss sections from three of his successes: the Oscar-winning A PLACE IN THE SUN, I REMEMBER MAMA (shot in San Francisco) and his contemporary epic Western, SHANE.

Six shorts films awarded prizes at last year's Foreign Film Festivals, many of them shown here for the first time in the United States.

A PREVIEW of France's newest and most controversial feature-length avant-garde film, VENOM AND ETERNITY, directed by Jean-Isadore Isou, sponsored by Jean Cocteau, and including Cocteau, Jean-Louis Barrault, Danielle Delorme, Blaise Cendrars, Daniel Gelin, among others. This film, which grows out of the St. Germain de Pres atmosphere, attempts to treat the film medium in a wholly revolutionary way. Winner of the Cannes Critique Internationale Prize in 1952.

Hy Hirsh's 3-D abstract film which, along with the Canadian Film Board's AROUND IS AROUND by Norman McLaren, stands as the first 3-D venture into abstraction anywhere, and amounts to proof that the steroscopic film is completely justified as a new resource.

(More)

(Continued)

Leni Riefenstahl's magnificent OLYMPIAD from Germany; rarely seen in this country due to its disappearance in Hitler's Germany just before the War.

Additional outstanding films and speakers have been carefully selected to comprise this ninth series, the most outstanding since "Art In Cinema's" inception. Arranged by Frank Stauffacher, "Art In Cinema" has been a copyright name since 1947, and is not to be confused with any other film showings in the Bay Area or elsewhere.

SEE ATTACHED PRINTED ANNOUNCEMENT FOR FULL DETAILS OF EACH EVENING'S PROGRAM

Admission: Series tickets for the five nights: $5.00. Museum Members: $4.00.

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA - SERIES NINE

Friday, October 2, 1953

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PALLE ALONE IN THE WORLD..... Astrid Henning-Jensen
MASKERAGE..... Max de Haas
BELLS OF ATLANTIS..... Ian Hugo
GO SLOW ON THE BRIGHTON LINE..... BBC

(Intermission: 10 minutes)

George Stevens, and sections from three of his films: I REMEMBER MAMA, A PLACE IN THE SUN, and SHANE.

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Program Notes

PALLE ALONE IN THE WORLD by Astrid Henning-Jensen (Denmark, 1952). The story is a recent but famous Danish children's book by Jens Sigagaard. The five-year old boy, Palle, has a dream in which he alone possesses all the world and its wonders, with no interference from anyone because no one else exists. The candy shop is deserted, and he can take what he desires; the banks have no guards, the streetcar is his to drive, as well as the fire engine and the airplane. But in due time all of these delights go flat because they exist in abundance without restraint, and he is alone. The theme is similar to Rene Clair's early THE CRAZY RAY (PARIS QUI DORT) although Clair had a group of adults "alone in the world". Thus the scene of Palle throwing money down the sewer-grill has a less meaningful moral symbol than desperately bored adults throwing money and jewels off the Eiffel Tower for amusement. This is a very recent arrival in this country, and without English titles. (20 minutes) (Rembrandt Films).

MASKERAGE by Max de Haas; photography by Prosper Dekeukeleire. (Netherlands, 1951) (Venice, Edinburgh Festivals, and winner of the Flaherty Award, 1952). A nocturnal visit to an anthropological museum, where the gallery of primitive masks takes on a life of its own helped along by an inventive sound track. The sounds are produced entirely by tape recordings of natural noises - wind, trains, whistles, voices, drums, etc. - speeded up, slowed down, played backwards, intermingled. These Sound-collages, called "concrete music", or electronic music, are the development of Pierre Shaeffer at the Research Department of the French Radio, and the method has, in short order, become of considerable interest to modern composers - John Cage and Darius Milhaud - to name but two. (10 minutes) (Rembrandt Films).

BELLS OF ATLANTIS by Ian Hugo, from a poem written by Anais Nin; abstract sections by Len Lye, and music by Louis and Beebe Barron. (U.S., 1952). This striking achievement in collaboration between the photographer, the poet, the designer, and the composer, "meeting in a strange territory of free associations", (as Peggy Grenville-Hicks says in an article in July's Vogue Magazine) was a hit at last year's Venice Film Festival. To the many followers of Miss Nin's writings, this fluid translation is a perfect aural and visual interpretation conceived on the level of the subconscious. Here again the music is a sound-collage made by the same tape method described in the preceding film. No musical instruments are used, and every variation of the sound substance is produced by technical manipulation of natural sound on tape. (10 minutes) (Courtesy Mr. Ian Hugo).

GO SLOW ON THE BRIGHTON LINE made by the British Broadcasting Company's television section. By placing the camera in the locomotive's cab, and taking a picture every eight seconds, the entire 51 mile run from London to Brighton is covered in 4 minutes or at a speed of about 800 miles an hour. (4 minutes) (BBC).

PLEASE DO NOT OCCUPY SEATS ALREADY CHOSEN BY OTHERS, DURING THE INTERMISSION.

GEORGE STEVENS

The films of director George Stevens are among the great achievements of Hollywood, from any point of view you choose to look at them. But his natural reticence and disregard for personal popularity has enabled the man, George Stevens, to remain in the background. Perhaps the most thorough and perfected craftsman in Hollywood today, he is not the type to write a book about it. His understanding of the camera and what it can do is only revealed by his films, and his films are so subtely constructed that this knowledge of technique is not of itself noticeable - until they are re-examined. They are films that are not made off the surface.

Stevens was born in Oakland, California, in 1905. His father, Landers Stevens, was a Pacific Coast matinee idol and his mother, Georgia Cooper, was an equally well-known favorite; his grandmother, Georgia Woodthorpe, was the toast of San Francisco during the Gold Rush days. His grandfather was the picturesque James Stevens, San Francisco attorney of the pioneer era. The late Ashton Stevens, long time dean of Chicago drama critics, was his uncle.

George made his first stage appearance at the old Alcazar Theatre in San Francisco, appearing with the famed tragedienne, Nance O'Neill in "Sappho". After completing his education in the little Mother Lode town of Sonoma, he took up acting as a career. He joined his father's company in the bay region, played juveniles and acted as stage manager. Then, in 1921, he came to Hollywood and his career took a curious detour.

He couldn't catch on as an actor. So instead of appearing in front of the cameras he started to work behind them. He was an assistant, then a second cameraman, then a first cameraman. He switched to gag writing, then wangled a job directing two-reel comedies. This led to features and in 1935 Stevens hit the big time as a topflight director. He has been there ever since, has taken on the dual responsibilities of both producer and director, has never regretted that he wasn't an actor.

Stevens' current project is a film version of Edna Ferber's latest best-selling novel, "Giant", a story of Texas. It is also the first independent film production he has made in his entire career of turning out outstanding box office successes and Academy Award winning films for the major studios. The "Giant" enterprise came about through the association of Miss Ferber, Stevens, and Henry Ginsberg, former head of Paramount Studios. The three joined forces on the project which they jointly own and control.

To the members of this audience, who have sat patiently for some years in this present, not-too-comfortable auditorium, the undiscovered alleyways and labyrinths of our most lively of modern arts may be found in Hollywood as well as in the off-beat film, the "art" film, the experimental film. In an article in the QUARTERLY OF FILM, RADIO, AND TELEVISION, Summer, 1953, Guy L. Cote, after a blistering attack on the "destructionists" of the film medium, says:

"A Dutchman has filmed his country through the rippled reflections in its canals. In Canada, a bespectacled artist is painting colored patterns directly onto a strip of film. A gray-haired Frenchman in a dirty raincoat has wedded his own images and the words of George Bernanos in a way no one has ever done before and has thus created a masterpiece. An American director has adaped AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY into a daring experiment of lingering dissolves and sustained close-ups, an experiment all the more unlikely since it has come straight out of one of Hollywood's major studios. Bert Haanstra, Norman McLaren, Robert Bresson, and George Stevens are the artists of today, and they are finding new riches in the land that the "destructionists have declared stale and barren."

F. S.

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THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA - SERIES NINE

Friday, October 9, 1953

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A PROPOS DE NICE.....Jean Vigo
PLAGUE SUMMER.....Chester Kessler
SONG OF THE PRAIRIE.....Jiri Trnka

Intermission (10 minutes)

POIL DE CAROTTE.....Julien Duvivier

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Program Notes

THE POETRY OF ATTACK

"If you regard all experiment as affectation and all that bewilders you as a calculated personal affront, and if you ask of art chiefly that it be easy to take, you are advised not to waste your time seeing Jean Vigo's...(films)...; go on back to sleep, lucky Pierre, between the baker's wife and the well-digger's daughter. If you regard all experiment as ducky, and all bewilderment as an opportunity to sneer at those who confess their bewilderment, and if you ask of art only that it be outré, I can't silence your shrill hermetic cries, or prevent your rush to the Fifth Avenue Playhouse; I can only hope to God I don't meet you there. If, on the other hand, you are not automatically sent either into ecstasy or catalepsy by the mere mention of avant-gardism, if your eye is already sufficiently open so that you don't fiercely resent an artist who tries to open it somewhat wider, I very much hope that you will see these films." This quotation, by James Agee, from a review in the NATION, applies not only to the Vigo films, but to all the films that Art In Cinema has been showing for seven years. At least, Agee's remark is precisely what we always sought to convey to our audience.

A PROPOS DE NICE by Jean Vigo; photographed by Boris Kaufmann (France, 1928). Jean Vigo died in 1934 at the age of 29 in the Paris where he was born, leaving behind him but a slim body of work consisting of four films. But this work has had a profound effect on, not only the French cinema, but the development of the film everywhere. Maybe the word "development" is wrong here, for he established no style, no disciples, no school. Quoting from Joseph and Harry Feldman's JEAN VIGO (British Film Institute): "Vigo's entire output can be seen in barely 3½ hours; but these 3½ hours are to the cinema what the thin folio of Keat's complete poetry is to literature. With two short subjects and two extremely modest feature productions, Vigo left a permanent mark on film history.....The financing of Vigo's films was rather unorthodox. He was actually an amateur film maker. He had nothing to do with the industry as such. He was sublimely indifferent to the commercial aspects of film production. Lydu, his wife, financed his first film as a gesture of faith and love; he paid for his second himself; and a French industrialist, who had never previously been connected with the film industry, financed his third and fourth films. As an amateur, however, Vigo was able to create professional films." Indeed, his few films have placed him, as any work of the film's history will show, among the greatest film creators.

His four films are: A PROPOS DE NICE (1928); JEAN TARIS (1932); ZERO DE CONDUITE (1933); L'ATLANTE (1934): For A PROPOS DE NICE it has been extremely difficult to find prints, and this one we see tonight is from the private collection of James Card of Rochester, N. Y., perhaps the only copy in the United States, and it has no beginning and end titles.

As a first film, it is a long way from the development of his last two. It is simply an exploration of Nice during the festive season, but with an ironic ruthlessness born of a combination of his distaste for Nice, and an intense belief in truth. In presenting this film at the Vieux Colombier in Paris, Vigo said, "A PROPOS DE NICE is only a rough draft. In this film, the description of a whole town begging from sheer laziness, we are spectators at the trail of a particular world. After indicating this life and atmosphere of Nice - and, alas, elsewhere, the film proceeds to a generalized impression of gross pleasures, to different signs of grotesque existence, of flesh and of death. These are the last twitchings of a society that neglects its own responsibility to the point of giving nausea and making you an accomplice in a revolutionary solution." (Courtesy James Card)(25 min.

(over)

PLAGUE SUMMER by Chester Kessler (U. S., 1952). "An animated cartoon film adapted from Kenneth Patchen's novel THE JOURNEY OF ALBION MOONLIGHT. It is a record of a journey by six allegorical characters through landscapes brutalized by war and 'the chronicle of an inner voyage through the mental climate of a sensitive artist, in the war-torn summer of 1940.'" (Quote by Chester Kessler in Roger Manville's EXPERIMENT IN THE FILM). Mr. Kessler will augment this program note in a short address to the audience. We are extremely sorry to state that Kenneth Patchen, who was also to be present, will not be able to attend. (From Society of Cinema Arts)(14 minutes)

SONG OF THE PRAIRIE. Produced by Czechoslovak State Film; directed by George (or Jiri) Trnka; music by John Rychlik. (Czechoslavakia, 1950). This hilarious bit of buffoonery, a satire on our own horse-operas was made by Jiri Trnka, a master of marionettes, or actually in this film, of puppets. They are photographed frame by frame, and the movements are adjusted between each shot. His most outstanding film done in this manner was THE EMPEROR'S NIGHTINGALE, a feature length production. Coming from behind the iron curtain in the form of a satirical attack on an American style in films, it turns out to be witty, sparkling and spirited, and if propaganda, not very good propaganda for what it apparently is intended to be. (Contemporary Films) (18 minutes).

POIL DE CAROTTE by Julien Duvivier, from the novel by Jules Renard; with Harry Baur, Catherine Fontenoy, and Robert Lynen. (French, 1931). The 30's saw a procession of the finest French films that have come from the industry. Many film historians say that this flowering was due to the fecund spirit of the avant-garde of the 20's, and indeed, almost without exception, the ranks of France's best directors were filled with the "enfants terribles" of the 20's: René Clair, Jean Renoir, Jean Vigo, Jacque Feyder, Claude Autant-Lara, etc. Julien Duvivier, also, brought a constantly fertile imagination to his films, many of them outright masterpieces without qualification. (UN CARNET DE BAL, LA BELLE EQUIPE, PEPE LE MOKO). The sensitive POIL DE CAROTTE was the first of France's procession of the 30's. It displayed a thorough understanding of the sound medium at a time when sound was a bug-a-boo to film technique, and the technique in this film was composed of film rhythms without regard to the supposed requirements of literary narrative. As such, it succeeded in portraying abnormal psychological states by indirection. This story of a child's suffering, frustrations, and despairs reveal, as in the recent FORBIDDEN GAMES, the fact that between the world of the child and the world of an adult is a gap too tragically wide to breach. (University of Wisconsin) (70 minutes).

Frank Stauffacher

(Music played during the intermission is RING AROUND THE MOON, a composition by Harry Partch, played by the Gate 5 Ensemble, on record).

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA - Friday, October 16, 1953

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WAITING.....Flora Mock
UBNARU and THINGS TO COME.Patricia Marx
(Intermission - 10 minutes)
OLYMPIAD.....Leni Riefenstahl

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Program Notes

THREE WOMEN BEHIND CAMERAS

There have been few women attracted to film directing. Without looking deeply into the history of film we find Germaine Dulac and Marie Epstein in France, Leontine Sagen, Lotte Rieniger, and Leni Riefenstahl in Germany, and none in America - at least none who have made much of an impression on the annals of the American film. Since the war, however, Ida Lupino has turned from actress to director in films, and has displayed high sensitivity and talent in commercial production. In France there is Nichole Verdres, who put together PARIS 1900, and the current LIFE BEGINS TOMORROW. But perhaps of more interest, is the rise of women directors in the American experimental field. The experimental film - far from the heavy business responsibilities of the commercial film, comparatively inexpensive, and freer in conception - has an unusual number of gifted women creators. Maya Deren can be accredited with starting, or, at least renewing, the post-war interest in experiments in the film in this country. Mary Ellen Bute, too, has long been associated with abstract films. Coming closer to home, Sarah Katherine Arledge and Josephine Booth are memorable for their work in the dance film. The three women directors to be shown on our program this evening are representative of three of the most widely different conceptions that one could find.

WAITING by Flora Mock (U.S., 1952). Several years ago at one of our "Art In Cinema" showings, a young man from Los Angeles arrived just before the showing with a small film in his hand, and with vociferous praise for this film which, he said, was made by an extremely talented young woman in his film class at UCLA. Sight unseen, we took a gamble and put it on the program; it was called PAPER MOON, by Flora Mock. Unfortunately, this writer was behind the screen tampering with some sudden crisis with our eternally tempermental sound system and did not get to see PAPER MOON, although the hand it received was proof that the gamble was justified. WAITING, is a far more accomplished film, however, and has received considerable praise for its ingenuity. Made as a partial fulfillment for a thesis in UCLA's Drama Department, it is really an experimental film that comes off, in the best sense of the word. (10 minutes) (Kinesis, Inc.)

THINGS TO COME and OBNARU by Patricia Marx (U.S., 1952-53). These two non-objective films represent an advanced development of a well-known school of film-making here in San Francisco: The non-objective film which was started by Harry Smith and Jordan Belson. Miss Marx is a disciple of Smith's, and she says that before seeing his films, she had some success in her native Queensland, Australia, as a realistic landscape painter. This all disappeared when she saw Smith's films; they opened up a different world, and a vastly different landscape. A word should be said about the "Live" orchestra accompanying these films tonight: The music stems from Bop, which in no way has any relation to Dixieland, or traditional jazz; but spills out according to feeling. We might say it is closer to the impulsive creative process of a painting by Jackson Pollock. It cannot follow a traditional chord-pattern as Dixieland jazz must. Bop in its most developed state, as in Dizzy Gillespie, is a far more meaningful music than this description indicates, but tonight the musicians will be improvising, without rehearsal, depending on the stimulus of the non-objective forms that pass before their eyes. There has been no "ensemble" rehearsal. (15 minutes) (Patricia Marx)

OLYMPIAD a film produced and directed by Leni Riefenstahl for the German Government, 1936-38. This spectacular and beautiful record of the Berlin Olympic Games in 1936 was made by Germany's most famous woman Director, and one who made considerable impression on the whole film scene in general. A most powerful talent equal to any male director, she was also a handsome and talented actress. Many of us remember a notable film by her during the thirties, THE BLUE LIGHT, in which she took the lead, besides directing it. OLYMPIAD is a poem not only on the human body but on all movement, all grace, all perfection, associated with games. Thus Leni Riefenstahl's conception and accomplishment reverts back to the classic Greek Olympic Games as an embodiment of perfection. The full length of OLYMPIAD runs some 4½ hours, making it impossible for general programming. This is Part Two, running 80 minutes. (Society of Cinema Arts)

F.S.

(George Stevens' talk here on October 2 has resulted in a considerable general interest in his older films. The Balboa Theatre will present A PLACE IN THE SUN for a week's run: October 28 to November 3. Mr. Stevens will appear on the Museum Television program, DISCOVERY, on Sunday, November 1.)

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA - SERIES NINE - FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 1953

CHARM OF LIFE.....Jean Gremillon
PRINCE ACHMED (Section).Lotte Reiniger
BLACKTOP..... Charles Eames
PARADE..... Charles Eames
(Intermission - 10 minutes)
WATERS OF TIME.....Basil Wright
THE END.....Christopher McLaine

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Program Notes

Due apparently to a delay in making the English titles on VENOM AND ETERNITY, the distributor of that film has been unable to meet tonight's booking date on Art In Cinema, and we are forced to make some exchanges with our October 30 program. Next week VENOM AND ETERNITY will be shown, together with Hy Hirsh's 3-D abstraction, COME CLOSER, and short films as announced: ANALOGIES NO. 1, HYPERBOLIC PARABOLOID, and ON THE EDGE. We will show the remaining films originally scheduled for October 30 that we have on hand tonight, with some last minute additions to round out the program. Forced to split up our last program of the series makes a kind of grab bag out of "From Object to Non-object." These disruptions, at the least, cause havoc in our original ideas on programming, and, at the most, great embarrassment to us for having you arrive here expecting a program that is, we gather, still in the processing laboratory.

THE CHARM OF LIFE by Jean Gremillon and Pierre Kast; narrated by Rex Harrison (French, 1950). Looking back at the French Academy's Prix de Rome Winners from 1860 to 1914, Gremillon has fashioned a gentle and humorous satire on those morals and virtues that had received offical sanction at the time. This film on art comes like a breath of fresh air amid the increasing ranks of poker-faced and serious educational films on art. The fact that Gremillon here deals with a kind of art that was naturally destined for the attic, is in itself humorous. Watching these paintings today, we wonder if even the most serious approach could be taken with a straight face. Jean Grimillon and Pierre Kast were responsible also for the film on Goya - DESASTERS DE LA GUERRE - which was shown on Art In Cinema last year: but the mood is hardly similar. (15 minutes) (Pictura Film Corporation)

THE ADVENTURES OF PRINCE ACHMED. Directed by Lotte Reiniger, and designed by her, and Walter Ruttmann, Berthold Bartoch, and Alex Kordan (German, 1926). We include a portion of an ancient print of this film only because it has a curious combination of fluid, unique abstraction, and rather dated realistic design. Lotte Reiniger's long-famous silhouette films - bits of black paper shot with an animation camera - have earned this talented woman film-maker a permanent place in the history of film development. (Society of Cinema Arts)

BLACKTOP and PARADE: two films by Charles Eames (U.S., 1952). Without having any previous practice or particular interests in film-making, the well-known industrial designer and architect, Charles Eames, suddenly took to the camera, producing several experiments that are of great interest and beauty. BLACKTOP consists of shots taken of the washing of a concrete floor of a school yard. Although the water surfaces under various conditions have often been used as material for abstract experiments on film - its fluid, moving quality is a natural - Mr. Eames' film has an extraordinary beauty due, in part, to the gentle strokes of the cleaning brooms. PARADE is one of those films anyone could do with a camera and children's toys in the backyard, but never do because amateur cinematographers and experimentalists so frequently overlook the obvious in favor of the spectacular. In the film, however, the spectacular often becomes a bore, and the obvious becomes a revelation. (20 minutes)(Charles Eames)

WATERS OF TIME made for the Port of London Authority by Basil Wright (British, 1951). After some years, the famous master of the British documentary, Basil Wright, turned from the business of producing films to the art of directing them again, in this treatment of the practical and the poetic aspects of the Thames River. Far from the perfection of his great SONG OF CEYLON, it is a mixture of straight detailed explanations of the workings of the Port of London's machinery, and broad, lyrical flights of sheer filmic magic. Both the bad and the good sides of sponsored industrial films are here, and one has the feeling that Wright's temperment could not resolve them as, say, Robert Flaherty could and did. Both the practical and the poetic are here, but they are a little like a mixture of oil and water. Yet the best parts of this film are enough to override the doubtful parts. (30 minutes) (British Information Service)

THE END: a film by Christopher McLaine. No program notes have been prepared due to its last minute appearance. A few words will be said over the speaker, however. (30 minutes) (Kinesis)

F. S.

TRAITE DE BAVE ET D'ETERNITE (VENOM AND ETERNITY) will be shown next Friday, October 30, as well as Hy Hirsch's 3-D film, COME CLOSER.

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA - SERIES NINE - OCTOBER 30, 1953

(Note: Keep your series tickets until next Wednesday, November 4, if you are interested in a special "dividend" program of this present series of Art In Cinema. This extra program, added partly because of the revived interest in the work of Jean Vigo, whose first film, A PROPOS DE NICE, was shown here on October 9, will contain his later ZERO DE CONDUITE. ANALOGIES NO. 1 by Jim Davis will also be shown, as well as other films to be announced. The program is free to series subscribers upon presentation of their series ticket. Public addmission: $1.00.)

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CURTAIN-RAISER.....Denver Sutton
HYPERBOLIC PARABOLOID.....Wheaton Galentine
ON THE EDGE.....Curtis Harrington
COME CLOSER.....Hy Hirsh

(this is a projection of 3 dimensional film, and necessitates using two synchronous projectors simultaneously and a special screen. We must apologize for the delay in setting up equipment.)

(Intermission - 10 minutes)

Mr. Alan Watts will speak briefly in regard to the following film:
TRAITE DE BAVE ET D'ETERNITE...Jean Isidore-Isou

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Program Notes

CURTAIN RAISER by Denver Sutton. Made four years ago for Art In Cinema's sixth series, we show it here again for its brief but never-stale exuberance and in answer to many queries from those who have examined the few feet shown in the glass case in the hall, and who have asked what these lines drawn with a ruling pen directly on the film look like when projected. (2 minutes) (S. F. Museum)

HYPERBOLIC PARABOLOID by Wheaton Galentine. (U.S., 1951). Variations on a mathematical curve in motion; an interesting contrast to the preceding composition with straight lines. (3½ minutes) (Wheaton Galentine)

ON THE EDGE by Curtis Harrington. (U.S., 1949). "Here what might be termed a state of mind is abstracted into a physical adventure: a mental attempt, given substance in cinematic, visual terms, becomes a suspenseful, doom-haunted adventure." (Mr. Harrington). Surrounded by other short abstract films this film also perfectly fits to point up the fact that the word "abstract" does not necessarily imply forms that are unrecognizable. The contrasts of shape and movement are here composed as an abstraction, too. (4 minutes) (Western Cinema Guild)

COME CLOSER by Hy Hirsh. (U.S., 1953). The content of the film will speak for itself, but the method of making it calls for a few comments. The optics of seeing depth are too well-known to need discussing here, except the reminder that two images must be projected, to correspond with the two eyes of human sight. At one time, experiments with 3-D film involved two images printed on a single film, separated by two colors, and reassembled by corresponding two-colored glasses. Two images on two strips of film using poloroid glasses, however, have proven better, and would be necessary, of course, with color-film. Above all, the illusion of three-dimension found in Cinerama and the other large-screen devices, have no relation with actual projection of two images, and depend entirely upon illusion due to peripheral width. Mr. Hirsh must be congratulated on solving this difficult technical task with very little means; he must be congratulated further for creating a true three dimensional design on film, his only predecessor being Norman McLaren of the Canadian Nat. Film Bd. (6 minutes)

TRAITE DE BAVE ET D'ETERNITE (VENOM AND ETERNITY). Produced by Marc-Gilbert Guillaumin; directed by Jean-Isadore Isou (French, 1952). Sponsored by Jean Cocteau. With Cocteau, Jean-Louis Barrault, Blaise Cendrars, Danielle Delorme, Marcel Achard, Daniel Gelin, Andre Maurois, Edouard Dhermite, Armand Salacrou.

Since the war, a group of poets in Paris who call themselves the lettrists have appeared, with Jean-Isadore Isou at their helm. The fact that this poetry movement has not to any great extent attracted poets elsewhere, or even generally been known to exist, seems a strange situation when we realize that in the space of about three years it has published a mountain of books, and, with an uncommon zest, attacked the medium of the film in two long feature films, and one short. With an appearance similar to a kind of reborn and outdated dadaism, this cult might seem to suggest a gigantic hoax. To quote from an article on Isou and his movement by Guy L. Coté in the Quarterly of Film, Radio and TV, however: "Hoaxes do not live long in St. Germain and this one has been going on for at least three years."

St. Germain de Près, indeed, has its aura over every manifestation of the lettrists. "POUR UN CINEMA AILLEURS! is today the message of St. Germain; its battle cry has been heard in Cannes and can be read on innumerable yellow posters near the Latin-Quarter Ciné Clubs. The violence of the outcry could well be a reaction to our own excesses: writers on the cinema, when not abstracting themselves to the highest planes of specialist criticism, have hammered home to the populace that the film is very definitely an art. Excessive zeal may not necessarily be the correct approach

(over)

to convert the cynical, but we do not think it is an overabundance of our enthusiasm which has prompted the Parisian intellectual to revolt." *

At any rate, as a movement in written poetry, the method is simply this: To destroy the word, the imagery in the word, and substitute random letters of the alphabet. At one explanation in the film, the speaker says:

> ".....a wilful accumulation of errors, a species of anti-grammar...."

As spoken poetry, it becomes disjointed vowel-sounds and other indecipherable noises.

> ".....the beauty of pure noise, for the harmony of outcry....."

In film, the method has been exactly the same - the destruction of the image, and an overladen sound track. It seems that this attack on the visual image is prompted by the fact that the film medium, of all the valid media of expression, is the only one yet to have escaped a concentrated destructive broadside. It is part of the existence of film that it be attacked constantly for its conduct, its bad use of its own powers, but it has not yet - until the lettrists - been attacked as a medium, by the medium itself. On the sound track, the author says:

> "I'll smite the picture with sun rays;
> I'll take old stock shots and scratch them;
> I'll claw at them, so that unknown beauty sees the light of day.
> I shall sculpt flowers upon the film stock, then I shall restore a new order within the disorder,
> Exactly as Cezanne changed impressionism into an art fit for the museums."

One would think that such an attack has no other reason except that it has never been done before, that this is only a "gimmick" for the desperate youthful intelligensia of St. Germain. (Aren't they, after all, trying to occupy extra-large boots left by the deplored and dethroned existentialists?) But, to quote Guy Cotē again: "The chaotic activities of the lettrists, for all their eccentricity, stem from much clear-cut Gallic logic. Given the original premise - 'The cinema has this in common with the churches, that in either we are bored to tears' - about which one can argue but scarcely dogmatize - Isou develops his theories with a precision of argument one could wish on some of our fuzzier film critics. Basing their contention on the general theory that any art form must first flourish but then inevitably degenerate, the lettrists divide the cinema's history into two phases: the first, amplique, is exemplified by the standard Hollywood product; the second, ciselant, will be the cinema of the future, the logical death of commercial film, rampaging through its sacrosanct tenets and financial superstructure.

"Such a thorough disregard for all that is sacred to the cinematographer may amuse the hard-boiled film magnate, but the activities of the lettrist group are just a little disturbing, and seem to us indicative of a strange malaise. Is the cinema a valid art form? Or is it a sign that commercialism is sapping the life blood of the cinema, and that the artist, by being forced to compromise at every step, will sooner or later become as anaemic an individual as the lifeless films he wishes to disown? Some of these artists think Isou may not have to wait long before the cinema dies - but of a natural death. Thorold Dickinson has said that the art of the film has not made any significant progress since Griffith and Eisenstein. Jean Vigo's shooting star, after an instant of burning glory, spent itself too soon; and the great French avant-garde of the 1920's flickers only occasionally on the screens of isolated film libraries. Would that their creators could jump out of the reels, disrupt the complacency of the producer in the studio Cadillac, plant a few cobblestones in the way of those fluid-drive tracking shots." *

This is a wordy program note for a film that in itself has enough verbiage to easily supply three features. One has the feeling that it is a justification, even a defense for the audience against the avowed purpose of the film -

> ".....to make the spectator react; to leave his head beat to shrivels, drawn and quartered....."

Yet these showings are, and always have been, an attempt to bring before the interested public all forms of film expression that search with unstale minds, from George Stevens to Jiri Trnka. The results occasionally amount to a mass exodus from the stil darkened auditorium; but explorations are not always easy, and some of them are not always successful. Since this preview here tonight of TRAITE DE BAVE ET D'ETERNITE is the showing of this strange film for the first time to an American audience, this presentation is in itself a kind of experiment. It can be considered to be what the extreme French avant-garde is doing in film today, but one should think of it as a small coterie of the avant-garde, a group, who are determined, at all costs, not to be derriére-garde. (2 hours) (Society of Cinema Arts)

Frank Stauffacher

*CINEMA SANS SENSE by Guy L. Coté in the Quarterly of Film, Radio and Television, Summer 1953. Volume VII, No. 4, P. 335.
(Other quotations are taken directly from the English subtitles on the film, as translated by Charles Clement. Thanks also to Mary McEwan for translating an article in CAHIER DU CINEMA, March, 1952, on Isou, by Maurice Schérer).

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA - SERIES NINE

Extra Program - November 4, 1953

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ANALOGIES NO.1.....James E. Davis
MAN ON THE LAND.....United Productions of America
LISTEN TO BRITAIN.....Humphrey Jennings
(Intermission - 10 minutes)
ZERO DE CONDUITE.....Jean Vigo

This extra "dividend" program winds-up Series Nine with a well-known film by Jean Vigo which clearly indicates the highly original direction he was going before he was cut down at the age of 29. The film runs only forty minutes, however, and we have used the extra time to include other outstanding films, but without noticeable continuity as a full program.

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ANALOGIES NO 1. by James E. Davis. (U.S., 1953). Mr. Davis' films on color and movement as expressed through his extensive experiments with his mobiles, are well known. In this film, he finds analogies between nature - the brooks and trees of the New Jersey countryside - and the flashing, colorful inventions within his studio. (10 minutes) (A. F. Films)

MAN ON THE LAND made by The United Productions of America for the American Petroleum Industry. (U.S., 1952). The UPA boys, besides being responsible for the most outstanding development in the entertainment cartoon - as exemplified by McBoing-Boing, the Magoo series, and many others - are also responsible for some of the most "alive" commercial films in a field that seems to sire an overabundance of costly and boring trash. We saw the two UPA films, one for the American Cancer Society, and one for CBS, at Art In Cinema's Series Eight last year, on a program called: "Joys and Miseries of the Sponsored Film." The point was to see how entertaining the medium could get, and still carry the sponsor's message with emphasis. This present film won an award at the 1953 Venice Film Festival. (15 minutes) (Standard Oil Company of California)

LISTEN TO BRITAIN by Humphrey Jennings; Crown Film Unit. (British, 1941). Like Jean Vigo, Jennings died early, leaving a small number of films which have taken an outstanding place in film history, but which promised an even more outstanding development had he lived. He was a documentary film maker, and he seemed to accomplish his greatest work during the strain and remorseful emotional depression of the Battle of Britain. It was his peculiar ability to depict, and realize, the emotions and the values of the ordinary Britisher at war. Call it propaganda, because it was just that, but how often have we been able to see this kind of propaganda in films, where no words are spoken, with no nationalistic haranguing, no flags blowing? This film has been regarded as one of the classics of documentary film, and in looking at it we should realize that it was composed for a particular situation, and at a particular time. (20 minutes) (Kinesis, Inc.)

ZERO DE CONDUITE. Scenario, direction, editing by Jean Vigo; photography by Boris Kaufmann; produced by Gaumon-Franco Film-Aubert. (French, 1933). For anyone who is interested in Jean Vigo's short life and work, we refer to an article by Henri Storck and P. E. Sales-Gomey, in "The Cinema" for 1951 (Penguin Books), called "Nought for Behaviour." It is a detailed and heart-twisting account of Vigo's tribulations during the making of this film, his first to be backed by a sponsor. The following year, Vigo made L'ATALANTE, his last film. ZERO FOR CONDUCT is considered a minor masterpiece in film history. But it calls for considerable flexibility in the mind of the spectator, and it requires sympathy from him too."This film has a theme rather than a story. The theme is the revolt of a number of boys against the repression of narrow discipline and evil living conditions in a sordid little French boarding-school. It is realistic in so far as these conditions are faithfully observed. But it is non-realistic (perhaps surrealistic) in its human relations. The masters are presented as the distorting interpretations of schoolboy minds conceive them: the Junior Master is a 'sport', so he develops into an acrobat who stands on his head in the classroom, who imitates Charlie Chaplin, who, when he takes the boys out for an airing, leads them in the pursuit of a girl down the street. The Vice-Principal is tall, darkly dressed, sinister in a broad-brimmed hat. He sneaks around the school, purloining and spying. He minces round the Principal of the School, who is represented as a dwarf with a black beard and a bowler hat. He is a dwarf because the boys despise him; he is bearded and bowlered because they fear him; and his final authority over them. The dormitory revolt has all the beauty of a pagan ritual...The whole incident has a beauty which transcends the sordid surroundings of the school...The revolt in the playground on Speech Day closes the film in a riot of schoolboy anarchy." (Roger Manvell in "The Cinema" 1951, pp 101-102). As a final word, we would like to note, but not apologize for, the bad condition of this print, which markedly reduces the whole effect of the film, as it does to many other films no longer in theatrical use. It is a problem without solution, and it might cause us again to realize that the film, alas, is not an art carved in stone.

Frank Stauffacher

1954

SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEW SERIES OF "ART IN CINEMA" STARTING IN APRIL WILL BRING NOTED AMERICAN FILM DIRECTORS AS GUEST SPEAKERS

Series Ten and Eleven of Art in Cinema's famous film showings will present an unusual study of the great American films, and the creative men behind them. Sub-headed "Aspects of the American Film: The Work of 15 Directors," these presentations will bring to the Bay Area some of the most influential feature directors themselves as guest speakers. In almost every case the films to be shown are of the directors' own selection. The seven programs in Series Ten will be on the following dates: Friday, April 9, Thursday, April 15, and Fridays, April 23, April 30, May 7, May 14, and Thursday, May 20. Series Eleven (Sept. 10 to Oct. 22) will present the second part of the program.

Rarely, if ever, has such a series been available to those interested in the film beyond its thinnest surface. And rarely do the creative artists of this complex art find time or opportunity to talk at first hand with the public who follows the art of the film.

This important project will bring together some of the most positive achievements in the American film - some of its great traditions and some of its more recent contributions to film culture. There are many things about this art that are fashioned better abroad, but there are also many things that are done better here. These are the distinctly native traditions that have enrichened the heritage of the film.

Among those scheduled for the first series as guest speakers is FRED ZINNEMANN, notable director of HIGH NOON and FROM HERE TO ETERNITY, who will show and discuss his earlier achievement for MGM, THE SEARCH.

VINCENTE MINNELLI, whose brilliant direction has been responsible for such outstanding films as MEET ME IN ST. LOUIS and AN AMERICAN IN PARIS, will speak about his approach to directing, and show sections of these films, as well as others.

The Western Tradition in the film will be exemplified by its greatest exponent, JOHN FORD. KENNETH MACGOWAN, who has been producer for JOHN FORD, will take the rostrum with FORD's personal favorite, YOUNG MR. LINCOLN.

CECIL B. DE MILLE will be represented by director MITCHELL LEISEN, who was formerly deMille's Art Director. THE CRUSADES will be shown and discussed.

(more)

(continued)

The pioneer of the film, not only in this country but internationally, was DAVID WARK GRIFFITH. His INTOLERANCE is scheduled, and director GEORGE SIDNEY, president of the Screen Directors Guild, will be the speaker.

STEPHEN BOSUSTOW, founder and president of famous UPA, the group that created an entirely new animated film, will be present to tell us about this revolution in camera design, and will bring with him examples, from GERALD MCBOING-BOING to THE TELL-TALE HEART.

The Documentary Film will be represented by WILLARD VAN DYKE, who carries the mantle of the documentary tradition from the great ROBERT FLAHERTY. VAN DYKE shares that evening with PARE LORENTZ's work in which he had a creative part.

Admission: Series Ten (7 programs): $7.50 (Museum Members: $6.00).

Series Ten and Eleven (14 programs): $12.00 (Museum Members: $10.00)

Tickets for single programs (sold only at the door on evenings of the performances): $1.25 (Museum Members: $1.00)

SEE FORTHCOMING PRINTED ANNOUNCEMENT FOR FULL DETAILS OF EACH EVENING'S PROGRAM

3-8-54